

# Conceptual Feasibility Study for Northern Kentucky Outer Loop (I-74)

## What is the study?

In 1991 the U.S. Congress acknowledged that the existence of an interstate often results in positive growth for an area. At the same time, national officials noted that certain parts of the country with less accessibility to the system demonstrated significantly less economic growth. In order to address needs for the unserved areas, Congress established by law a set of new "corridors" that were considered to have national significance and authorized the study of these proposed routes for future construction consideration. The routes affecting Kentucky, including I-66, I-69, I-73, and I-74, are shown on the map above as red dashed lines.

In 1998, Congress included by law a route through northern Kentucky, currently identified as the "Northern Kentucky Outer Loop", as part of the I-74 priority corridor, and funds were earmarked for an I-74 feasibility study.

The Conceptual Feasibility Study will be used to help officials decide if the Northern Kentucky Outer Loop can be cost-effective and if it can enhance the quality of life for those living in the impacted region.

As cost and economic studies were being performed, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet staff also held a series of meetings with local elected officials and interest groups in

counties expected to be impacted by the new road. The first series of meetings led to a favorable consensus on an option featuring a 5 to 10 mile wide corridor (shown on the map on pg. 3), extending from the Markland Dam in Gallatin County to the Ohio River near Maysville. Counties that could be directly impacted by the option are Bracken, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Mason, Owen, and Pendleton.

One of the important issues currently being considered for the Northern Kentucky Outer Loop is how much access and what type of access should be allowed for adjoining properties and local roads. Two types of roadways that could be utilized for the "Loop" are being evaluated during the study—a 70-mph traditional interstate highway and a 60-mph arterial highway. The proposed arterial could ultimately have either two or four lanes, depending on the outcome of the finished study. Examples of similar arterial facilities can currently be found in northern Kentucky: US 127 between Frankfort and Owenton; KY 237 and KY 18 in Boone County; KY 17 near Pioneer Park in Kenton County; and the AA Highway. Regardless of whether a two-lane or four-lane option is chosen, interchanges would be required at I-71 and I-75.

## Counties and Local Group Comments

To gain public input on the study, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet has implemented a series of meetings with a Regional Advisory Committee and local focus groups. The Regional Advisory Committee is made up of local elected officials and community representatives from the seven counties affected by the “Loop”. The committee discussed the impacts of the project from a regional perspective. In addition to the Regional Committee, local focus groups were formed for each county. These local groups consisted of citizen representatives charged with addressing local concerns for the “Loop”. The first series of meetings, arranged with the cooperation of the Area Development Districts and conducted by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, have yielded numerous comments including the following:

- ▶ Could offer the potential for providing needed capacity for drinking water, recreational opportunities and industrial expansion through the creation of new lakes and reservoirs, especially for counties not on the Ohio River. This could be done by filling in strategic areas to dam up water.
- ▶ Could be a stimulus to provide flood control on the Licking River.
- ▶ Provide east-west traffic options to relieve the existing main routes that are predominately north-south. Also, would take truck traffic off local roads and out of the local communities.

- ▶ Provide options to offset declining agricultural economy.
- ▶ Could create opportunities to allow residential growth and easier access to shopping, educational, and medical facilities.
- ▶ Concern that a new high volume route would disrupt and change character of the existing rural area.

*Link urged Carl Dixon (Kentucky Transportation Cabinet) to study all angles including the disruption to the way of life for many people.*

*reference to Darrell Link, Grant County Judge Executive*  
**source - Grant County News**

Discussion of the facility type likely to be constructed brought out a range of thoughts and ideas:

- ▶ Concern about the safety of the road if access similar to the AA Highway were allowed. This was especially true in the eastern counties.
- ▶ Concern that an interstate would not allow access or development benefits to adjoining landowners.
- ▶ Concern that an interstate would probably cost more and thus be less likely to be funded.
- ▶ Opinions that an interstate or arterial with access only via interchanges would be the safest type facility.

## Study Milestones

A draft environmental overview of the study area has been completed. Other than the identification of several buildings on the National Register of Historic places, no issues have been found to date that would prohibit roadway construction, or that could not be avoided, minimized or mitigated.

A draft report identifying the existing roadway and socioeconomic conditions has also been completed and is being reviewed by the Cabinet. The final report will form the baseline for comparing projected impacts and changes expected to occur if a high-type roadway is constructed.

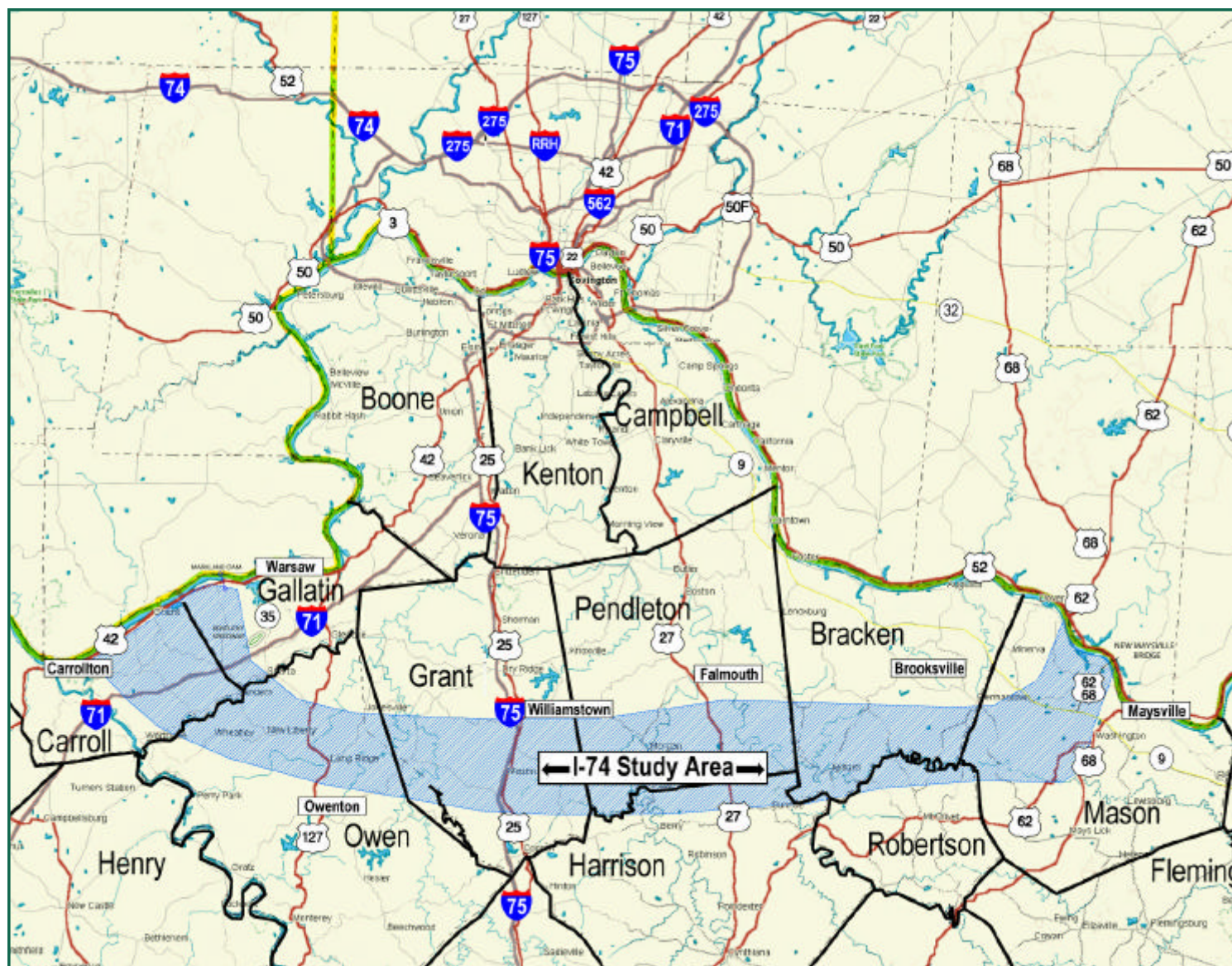
Obviously, if the project becomes a reality, then more detailed studies will be needed to evaluate alternate alignments and to select the best location for the roadway.

The first series of focus group meetings has been completed for all counties. The next round of meetings will occur as soon as reports on traffic projections and economic development are finished, allowing meaningful discussions to be held on the pros and cons of the proposed roadway and its impact on surrounding communities. The next round of public meetings are expected in late June or early July.



## Study Corridor Map

(Blue band represents study corridor)



If you have questions regarding the study, contact:

**Carl D. Dixon, P.E., Branch Manager**

## Division of Planning

Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

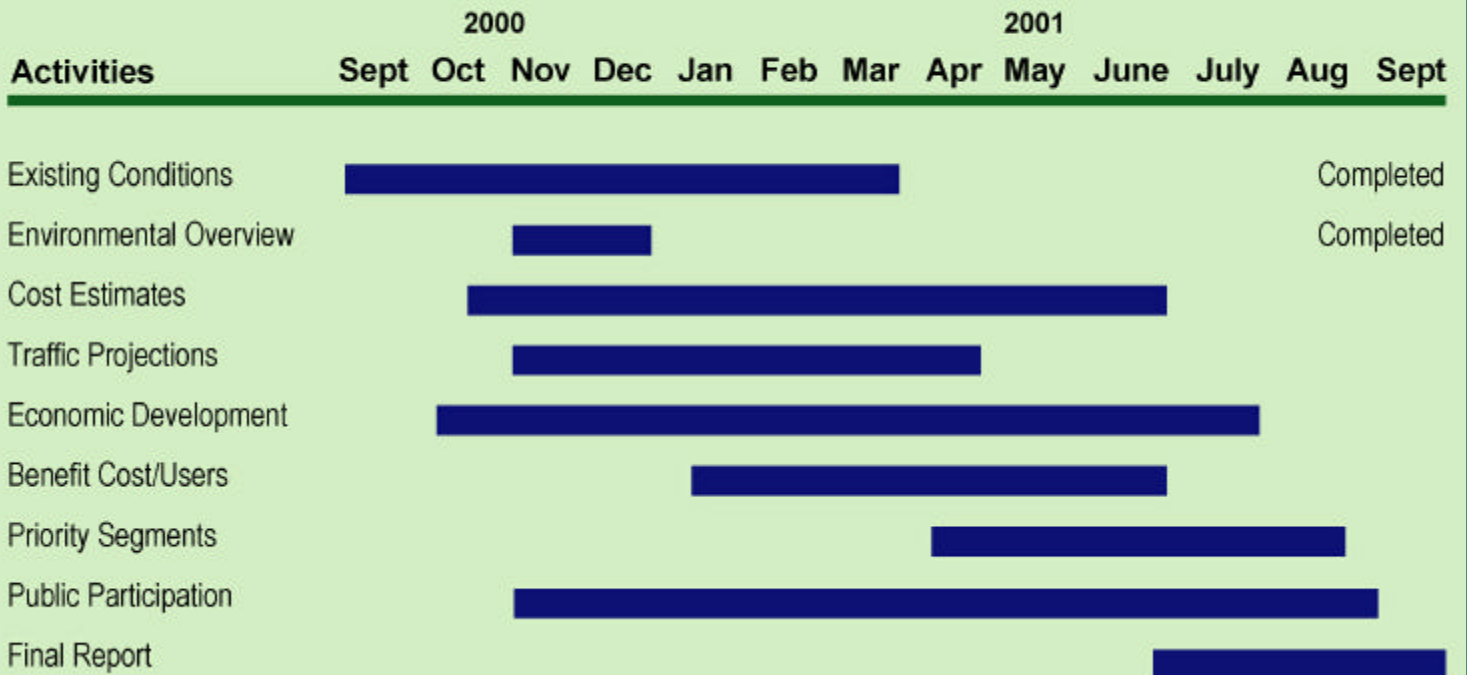
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\*\* This newsletter as well as the project questionnaire are available on the internet at [www.kytc.state.ky.us/planning](http://www.kytc.state.ky.us/planning)

# Feasibility Study



*The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet and American Consulting Engineers - keeping you informed about the projects that impact your community's future.*

**Ms. Annette Coffey, P.E.**

**Director**

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